Iron County Register
BY ELI D. AKE.
IRONTON, - - - MISSOURI

PHŒBE.

Ere pales in Heaven the morning star,
A bird, the loneliest of its kind,
Hears Dawn's faint footfall from afar
While all its mates are dumb and blind.

It is a wee sad-colored thing,
As shy and secret as a maid,
That, ere in choir the robins ring,
Pipes its own name like one afraid.

It seems pain-prompted to repeat
The story of some ancient ill,
But "Phœbe! Phœbe!" sadly sweet
Is all it says, and then is still.

It calls and listens; earth and sky,
Hushed by the pathos of its fate,
Listen; no whisper of reply
Comes from its doom-dissevered mate.

"Phœbe!" it calls and calls again,
And Ovid, could he but have heard,
Had hung a legendary pain
About the memory of the bird;

A pain articulate so long
In penance of some moldered crime
Whose ghost still flies the Furies' thong
Down the waste solitudes of Time;

Waif of the young World's wonder-hour,
When gods found mortal maidens fair
And will malign was joined with power
Love's kindly laws to overbear.

Like Progne did it feel the stress
And coil of the prevailing words
Close round its being and compress
Man's ampler nature to a bird's?

One only memory left of all
The motley crowd of vanished scenes,
Her's—and vain impulse to recall
By repetition what it means.

"Phœbe!" is all it has to say
In plaintive cadence o'er and o'er,
Like children that have lost their way
And know their names, but nothing more.

Is it a type, since Nature's lyre
Vibrates to every note in man,
Of that insatiable desire,
Meant to be so, since life began?

I, in strange lands at gray of dawn,
Wakeful have heard that fruitless plaint
Through Memory's chambers deep withdrawn
Renew its iterations faint.

So nigh! yet from remotest years
It seems to draw its magic, rife
With longings unappeased and tears
Drawn from the very source of life.
—*James Russell Lowell, in Century Magazine*

JOHN PAUL.

He was doubtless a tramp. His worn and dusty dress, his crushed felt hat, his dirty shoes, and the checkered muslin shirt, tied at the neck with a bit of rusty black ribbon, and the little bundle borne on his shoulder from the end of a stout stick, told the story plainly. Added to this was the beard of a week's growth, except the mustache, which had not been touched by a razor. He was rather a gay and good-looking fellow for all that, with a keen eye, an open countenance, and a well-knit figure, and he strode along as though he felt that the wandering idler was really the king of other men, and tramping a superior art.

Presently he threw down his stick and bundle, and made a leap in the road, just in time to stop a runaway horse, with the long reins flapping about his feet, and the wagon behind him swaying from side to side. The occupants of the wagon, a couple as old-fashioned as the carry-all in which they sat, had been frantically crying to the horse to stop, and now that some one had stopped him, were profuse in their thanks.

"Bob is not vicious," said the man, whose language and dress showed him to belong to the Society of Friends, "but two geese flew across the road, and before I knew it he had jerked the reins out of my hands and started on a run. I'm obliged to thee, for if thee hadn't caught him he might have spilled us over the high bank below there."

The tramp nodded and turned to go, when the woman spoke.

"Friend," she said, "thee has split thy coat up the back."

"Have I!" returned the tramp, feeling for the rent. "So I have. I must get it mended somewhere."

"As thee did it helping us—" said the man, putting his hand in his pocket.

"I bar that," said the tramp, raising his hand, and showing with his laugh a set of white teeth. "I don't take money for stopping horses; but I thank you for the intention."

"I tell thee what to do, friend— I don't know thy name," said the woman.

The tramp smiled again, and said, "You may call me John Paul, if you choose."

"Well, friend Paul, does thee see that white house among the trees, off from the road back yonder? Thee go there, and say to Rachel—that's our niece—that her uncle and aunt, Mahlon and Naomi Stacy, sent thee, and ask her to sew thy coat for thee. She'll make it passable, at least."

"Thank you, ma'am; I'll do so."

The tramp removed his battered felt hat, made a bow rather more courtly than might have been expected, and the parties pursued their several ways.

A brisk two minutes' walk brought John Paul to the lane leading from the road to the Stacy farm-house. Down this lane he turned, and when half way in it, heard a woman scream. The next minute a pretty young girl, with her hair flying over her shoulders, ran out of the house, pursued by a great, burly, rough fellow, who stopped when he saw the other tramp coming. The girl kept on, but when she observed the newcomer, stopped also, in doubt whether it was not a confederate.

"Anything wrong?" inquired John Paul.

"That—that man!" gasped the girl.

There be tramps, and tramps. The one to whom Paul advanced was of the baser order; brawny, whisky-sodden, and brutal.

"What do you mean by frightening this young lady?"

"Take it easy, pard," rejoined the big tramp, grinning. "The gal gave me a lunch, and I wanted to sweeten the victuals with a kiss. There's no bones broke."

John Paul's face reddened. He took off his coat and threw it on the palings of the lane fence.

"Now," said he, quietly, "you'll leave."

"When I git good an' ready," answered the other, insolently.

"No, sir—now."

"Ha! ha! Suppose you spell able. Do you see that?" and he thrust his fist under the nose of the younger man.

It was dashed aside suddenly and the right hand of John Paul fell with force between the eyes of the tramp, who fell, doubled in a heap. He was up in an instant, to go down again by another facer. Picking himself up, he made a rush with both arms extended toward his opponent. It was impossible to parry this, and it was not attempted. Paul stepped suddenly aside, and before his antagonist could recover himself, caught him on the throat with his right arm, and suddenly bending him over his own extended knee, threw the great mass of flesh to the ground with a force that made quite an audible sound. The ruffian lay there a minute or so motionless.

"Thee hasn't killed him?" timidly inquired the girl.

"No, miss," said John Paull, "but I've given his backbone a jar that makes him sick of fighting. Come, sir, get up," he added, as the man began to stir; "pick yourself up and go, or I'll give you more of it, and worse."

"I'm goin'," said the other, rising slowly, and rubbing his back— "I'm goin', boss. But I say, you ain't a man; you're a steam-ingine, you are."

As soon as the fellow had dragged himself out of sight, John Paul took his coat, and finding on inquiry that the girl's name was Rachel, gave her the message of her aunt. He followed her, at her request, to the house, where he seated himself on the back veranda, while Rachel, coat in hand, disappeared in the kitchen.

In a few minutes she came out. "There is thy coat, friend, as good as new; it was only ripped in the seam, not torn, and— Oh dear! There is that vexatious Crumple in the garden again!"

Paul looked, and saw that a cow had got into an inclosure not meant for browsing ground, and volunteered to get her out. It did not prove an easy job, however; and by the time he had managed to overcome her dodges and maneuvers, and finally got the brute safely into the barn-yard, he saw the farmer and his wife drive in, and knew from her manner that Rachel was telling them all about the fight. As he came forward to reclaim his mended coat, Mahlon Stacy met him with a beaming countenance.

"Thee has placed me under obligation again, friend Paul," he said. "I hear thee was obliged to resort to force. It is against the principles of Friends, but since thee had to do it, I'm glad to learn thee did it well. A big man, too, for I think the one we met with blood on his face was the one thee dealt with."

"There was no trouble in handling him, sir. The matter is not worth speaking of. I am only too glad to have been of service to the young lady." With these words he moved off.

"Stay, friend," cried the farmer. "If thee won't have compensation for thy service, thee'll at least grant us another favor, and take supper with us."

The young man hesitated, but glancing at the women, said, "I—I am not in a fit condition for the table; I—"

"If that's all," eagerly joined Mahlon, "we can arrange that. Come with me." And the young man was speedily ushered into a chamber, where his host gave him shaving materials, and left him, to hear more definite particulars about the encounter, in which, like many men of peaceful habits, he took a deep interest.

At the supper table, John Paul, in evading minute inquiry, let them know that he lived in New York when at home, and gave them some account of the metropolis, of which they had heard, but never seen, and did it in a plain and lucid way that showed he kept his eyes open during his tramping.

After supper Mahlon Stacy and John Paul sat on the veranda while the women-folk were clearing the table, and the former, after two or three preliminary hems, spoke his mind.

"Thee was looking for work, perhaps, friend?"

"No, I can't say that I was."

"Thee would take a job if thee could get one, maybe?"

"That depends on what it is."

"Can thee mow?"

"Well, sir, it is new business for me; but I'll do the best I can for you till you can do better; and as for the wages, we'll not differ on that."

"Then thee'll stay here, and we'll tackle the south field to-morrow," exclaimed the farmer, joyously. "Naomi, thee'll get a room ready for friend Paul. He's going to help with the hay."

So John took service with Mahlon Stacy, or, as he put it to himself that night, "I'm hired to Rachel's uncle," and he laughed at the same time as though it were the funniest thing possible.

The hay-making was over in three days, but John, as they called him now, remained. He evidently knew very little about farming, but took teaching kindly. He developed a great knowledge of horses, their needs and wants, and altogether Mahlon was satisfied with his raw hand. The fourth day it rained so that out-door work was stopped. The farmer and John sat in the kitchen, the farmer in a rather downcast mood. John watched Rachel's motions for some time, as she moved about gracefully, and then took a book which lay upon a shelf and began reading.

On Saturday John got two hours' leave of absence, and returned with a bundle, which he carried to his room. The next day he came down to breakfast in a new light suit. Mahlon made no comments, but after breakfast asked John if he would go with them to Friends' meeting, or to some other place of worship, or would stay at home. "We go to meeting, of course; but Rachel's father was 'Piscopal, and Rachel goes there. Then there's the Methodists and Presbyterians."

"I shall go to the Episcopal church," said John.

"Ah! Well, we drop Rachel at the cross-road always, and thee can get out there."

So John walked from the getting-out place to the church, which was a missionary chapel, where the rector of an adjoining parish gave a service every alternate Sunday. There were few attendants, and the coming of a fine-looking young man made a sensation. When service was over, however, and they all came out, some one whispered that the new-comer was "Mahlon Stacy's hired man," and the sensation died out.

Absalom Browning was waiting in his buggy.

"Shall I drive thee home, Rachel?" he asked.

"Thank thee, no, Absalom. I came in the carry-all with uncle and aunt, and they'll stop for me at the corner."

Absalom walked alongside, however, leading his horse and talking to Rachel, and John fell behind. When they came to the corner, Mahlon and his wife were already there, and Absalom renewed his request. Rachel made no demur, for Naomi said it would relieve their horse with one less in. John smiled to himself. The aunt favored the courting.

The summer months came and went. Absalom Browning came and went once a week, and sometimes twice, and John Paul remained on the farm. He grew to be a favorite, and his activity and physical strength, with his great good-nature, made him popular with the young men around. Absalom did not like him, however. With Rachel he got along famously. She had been his friend from the first, never forgetting his opportune championship. Then he read so beautifully, and was full of tales of adventure, for, according to his own account, he had traveled a great deal. In his wanderings he had picked up a deal of knowledge too, as leaked out bit by bit, and he bade fair to make a good farmer, so the farmer liked him too. But Mahlon, whose spirits had been getting lower and lower, at length grew quite gloomy, and his gloom was shared by his wife, and even infected Rachel.

The cause of this trouble John Paul learned one day from the talkative clerk at the store where the Stacys dealt, and with it he got some of the family history. It appeared that Rachel Taylor, the younger sister of Mahlon's wife, had eloped and married with Gordon Forsyth, a gay and wealthy young gentleman from New York, who had accidentally met and fallen in love with her. Rachel had been "disowned" for marrying "out of meeting," but worse followed. Forsyth, who was on the downward course, soon got tired of his pretty wife, resumed his dissipation, and was drowned while drunk two years afterward, leaving his widow with a one-year-old child. Rachel Forsyth did not long survive her husband, who proved to have been at his death bankrupt. He had managed to get Mahlon Stacy, who believed in him, to become bondsman in a case involving, it afterward turned out, a questionable transaction. Mahlon paid the judgment, but was obliged to mortgage the farm, which had been in the Stacy family four generations. He adopted little Rachel, sent her to the West Town school to be educated, and bit by bit accumulated money sufficient to discharge. The bank in which he kept his savings broke, and he not only lost his store, but was unable to meet the interest for a year. The mortgage was in other hands—a rich New-Yorker held it—and proceedings to foreclose had been begun. If Rachel married Absalom Browning, who was himself a rich man's son, there would be no difficulty. "They say that Rachel hangs back," concluded the clerk. "I rayther guess she'll give in at last. That's the way Mahlon'll pull through, in my judgment."

John came home after hearing all this, and found Absalom Browning there. The young Quaker was got up quite smartly—in plain clothes, to be sure, but his shad-bellied coat was of the finest olive-colored broadcloth, and his broad-brimmed hat of the very best beaver. He remained to supper, and was treated with marked consideration by the farmer and his wife. Rachel seemed to be a little embarrassed. John glanced at her a little curiously, but she avoided his eye.

The next morning John went out early to see to the horses and cattle. When he returned to breakfast he observed that Mahlon was curt and monosyllabic of speech, Naomi gloomy, and Rachel distressed. John ate his meal silently, and then went to the field with Mahlon. But he soon made an excuse to return to the house. Rachel was alone there, seated with her face in her hands, and so intent on her thoughts that she did not hear him come in.

"What is the trouble, Rachel?" he asked.

The girl started up, and the blood rushed to her face, but she made no reply.

"Is it to be a wedding?" he continued.

"John Paul, thee's—thee's—"

"Or did you send Absalom B. about his business last night?"

"What is that to thee, John? Uncle is displeased with me, Aunt is sorry, and now thee must— What is it to thee whether I have or not?"

"Rachel," said he, taking her trembling hand, and retaining it in spite of her effort to withdraw it, "it is everything to me, for I love you dearly."

The eyes of the girl filled with a sudden light. "Thee! thee love—*me!*"

John read the answer to his question before he put it, and drew the sobbing Rachel to his breast.

How long they stood there neither could tell, but at the sound of Mahlon Stacy's heavy step on the veranda, Rachel made her escape.

"What keeps thee in the house, John?" inquired the farmer, entering the room. "We have work to get through with."

"Let that pass for a moment, Mr. Stacy. I have something to say. Who holds now the mortgage on the farm?"

"Why does thee ask?"

"From no idle curiosity. What is his name, and where does he live?"

"His name is Frobisher, and he lives in New York. It his lawyer, Woodford, who has the business in hand."

"Woodford! Not Charles Woodford? So! In that case make yourself perfectly easy. I can arrange all that for you."

"Is thee serious, John Paul? Does thee think Frobisher would do it for *thee*?"

"Why not? He never refused me anything I wanted yet, from the time we went to the same school."

"Thee must be out of thy mind, John. This Frobisher, they say, is worth a million of dollars. Does thee expect to influence *him*? If I didn't know thy habits I should say thee'd been drinking."

"The man you speak of is worth more than you say, in estate, but he'll give you all the time you need. Let me see. This is nearly eight. The mail closes at ten. I have time to write a letter, hitch up, and get to the Post-office in good time. You'll have an answer by to-morrow evening;" and without further words he went out, harnessed the horse, and drove to the village, leaving Stacy staring in amazement. When he came back the farmer was still in the house, with Naomi and Rachel, discussing John's freak. During that day and next morning Mahlon would glance at John at times with an expression made up of hope, and suspicion of John's sanity.

At noon next day John quietly hitched up the horse again, and without asking leave, drove off, with a reassuring smile to Rachel's inquiring looks as he went. This was hours before the mail was due, and John had on his Sunday clothes, too. He did not get back until suppertime, and then handed a letter to Mahlon, in presence of the rest. It was postmarked "New York," and the farmer opened it with trembling hands.

"John," said he, after he had read it, and handed it to Naomi, "thee made no vain boast. Woodford says I can have all the time I want. Thee has done me great service. I only wish I knew how I could repay thee."

"Perhaps you can," said John, smiling, and taking Rachel by the hand. "Suppose you let me take care of this young lady in future?"

"Why, Rachel!" cried Mahlon, in astonishment. "Does thee and John—"

But Rachel's answer was not distinctly audible, her face being so close to John Paul's waistcoat.

"Has thee thought about means to support a wife?" inquired Naomi, with a last flutter of expiring loyalty to Absalom Browning.

"There need be no trouble on that score," returned John. "But I have a confession to make. I have in some measure deceived you. When you asked my name, I just said—John Paul."

"And has thee been using a name to which thee has no right?" demanded Naomi, severely.

"I have a right to that name, but there is more of it. I am John Paul Frobisher."

"Frobisher!" exclaimed Mahlon, as a light broke in on him. "Then thee is—"

"I am, or rather was, the holder of your mortgage. I say was"—drawing a paper from his breast-pocket and handing it to Naomi. "I have been to West Chester, and made an assignment to your wife. I hope she'll be a lenient creditor to you, Mahlon. You see, I had been taking a pedestrian tramp for health and amusement, and you came across me just as I had run sufficiently to seed in the journey, and was about to take the cars for home. This face of Rachel's attracted me, and she's the captive of my bow and spear, anyhow. I won her by fair fight," said he, laughing.

They all sat down to supper. The farmer said his customary grace with great unction—"For what we are to receive, the Lord make us truly thankful!" and John, whose hand had found that of Rachel somehow under the tablecloth, responded with a fervent "Amen!"—*Harper's Weekly.*

Slaves of the Cooking Stove.

When people of the old world begin to mingle freely with Americans, the first thing to attract their attention, usually, is the strange food on the tables. Many articles they never before saw or heard of. But what excites their surprise is the extraordinary number of things provided for each meal.

"Here are seven kinds of cake, and *nothing to eat*," we heard a traveler remark one evening at a hotel in Vermont, when he came in hungry from fishing on Lake Champlain.

That's just it. Seven kinds of cake and nothing to eat! He might have added, three kinds of preserves, a jar of mixed pickles, and a pile of flapjacks. All this, and nothing to eat! A man of sound digestion and healthy appetite would naturally wave these frivolous dainties aside, and ask for some proper human food. Good bread and butter would answer his purpose. Add baked potatoes, and he would rise from the table refreshed and satisfied, and sleep his allowance of eight hours as unlike the proverbial "top" as possible. What can a hungry man do with pound-cake and pickles?

But, ladies, of all the viands ordinarily seen on tables, this trash is the most laborious to prepare. It is the eternal round of pie, cake and sweetmeats that wears out so many noble women in the country, who would rather die than come short of what they think is their duty to their households.

The remedy for this is a more rational mode of cookery. Why spoil good fruit by flattening it out into innutritious pie? Good bread, good meat, good vegetables, good fruit—what do we want more? A Scotch farmer gets a good breakfast from oatmeal and milk, and goes to bed on bread and cheese. Ladies, abolish the seven kinds of cake, put on the table something to eat, and let simpletons growl if they will.—*N. Y. Ledger.*

Confidence in Self.

Rely on yourself; take it for granted that you can accomplish your plans. Never say "I can't!"—they are ignoble words. He who does not feel within himself the power to conquer fate is not a man in the true sense of the word. Of course it is a misfortune for him, since he can never be any benefit to himself or anybody else. Heaven help the woman who marries him! Somebody says, "Oh, I don't like these self-conceited folks!" My friend, self-conceit and self-confidence are two qualities as different as light and darkness; and though the self-conceited person may not be the most agreeable of companions, we infinitely prefer him to the creeping, cringing, craven-spirited fellow who is never ready for an emergency, and who, like Uriah Heep, spends his time trying to be "umble." The man who says "I will do it!"—who says it from his heart, and means it, too—who bends his whole energy to the work, almost always accomplishes it; and then people call him lucky and successful, and all that sort of thing, when, in fact, his luck has been brought about by his own persevering efforts and by his confidence in himself. Fortune detests cowardice; and the man who will not be conquered by trifles is her prime favorite.

REPORT OF POSTMASTER-GENERAL JAMES.

WASHINGTON, November 21.

The following are some of the leading features of Postmaster-General James' report:

The total expenditures during the fiscal year ended June 30, last, were $39,251,736.46; total revenues, $36,785,397.97. Excess of expenditures, $2,466,338.49; other deficits, on account of "bad debts" and "compromise" accounts, $14,790.86—making the total excess of expenditures, $2,481,129.35. The number of postage-stamps, postal-cards, stamped envelopes, etc., issued during the year was 1,504,311,542, amounting in value to $34,625,435.91, against a total value during the previous fiscal year of $32,087,342.46.

The total amount of postage collected during the year on newspapers and periodicals mailed to regular subscribers from known offices of publication and from news agencies, at two cents per pound, was $1,390,048.64, an increase of $172,596.06, or a little over 14 per cent.

The weight of second-class matter mailed was 69,952,432 pounds, or 34,976 tons. The number of postoffices at which the matter was mailed was 4,821, an increase of 398 over the number for the previous year.

DEAD LETTERS.

By careful reckoning based upon an actual count made in every post-office in the United States during the first week in December, 1880, it has been ascertained that the whole number of letters mailed in this country in the last fiscal year was 1,046,107,348. The number reaching the Dead-Letter Office during the same period was 3,323,621, or one in every 315. The total number of letters and of packages that were of sufficient value to be recorded and filed, received during the year ended June 30, 1881, was 3,674,205, an increase of 354,623 over the number received during the preceding year. For convenience of treatment they were classified as follows: Unclaimed domestic letters 2,791,050; held for postage, 279,244; misdirected, 242,556 (not including 31,184 foreign letters with imperfect or erroneous addresses); without any superscription whatever (the majority of them bearing stamps to pay postage), 9,473; letters addressed to foreign countries, and containing articles (coin, jewelry, etc.) which are forbidden to be sent in the international mails, 1,292; letters of foreign origin, 284,127 (of which 31,184 were sent to the Dead-Letter Office on account of erroneous or imperfect addresses); foreign parcels (unopened), 13,866; and domestic packages, 52,591.

Of the letters and packages opened, 18,617 were found to contain money amounting to $40,587.80; 22,012 contained drafts, money orders, checks, notes, etc., the aggregate face value of which was $1,899,062.51; 37,978 contained receipts, paid notes and canceled obligations of all sorts; 33,731 contained photographs; 61,556 contained small remittances of postage-stamps; and in 75,213 there were found valuable articles of third and fourth class matter in endless variety. The amount of money separated from dead letters for which no claimant could be found was $6,584.40, which was deposited in the Treasury. The amount of postage collected upon short-paid matter forwarded to destination, and upon unclaimed packages of third and fourth class matter returned to owners, was $3,109.34. The records of the Department show that 8,338,918 registered letters and packages were mailed in this country during the year. Of this number only 2,614 reached the Dead-Letter Office; and of these 2,131 were finally delivered to the owners, the balance being placed on file awaiting identification by the parties interested.

THE POSTAL MONEY-ORDER SYSTEM.

The operations of the money-order system are multiplying yearly under the impulse of prosperous trade and the influence of immigration, with the rapid development of the newer States and Territories, and the demand for additional means of intercommunication and exchange. At the commencement of the last fiscal year the total number of post-offices authorized to issue and to pay domestic money-orders was 4,829. During the year 341 additional money-order offices were established, and seven were discontinued, leaving 5,163 in operation on the 30th day of June, 1881. Since then 338 new offices have been established, making the whole number of money-order offices in operation at date of this report 5,499. The number of domestic money-orders issued during the year was 7,663,232, of the aggregate value of $105,075,769.35; number of orders paid, 7,627,710, amounting in value to $104,219,871.65; to which must be added the amount of orders repaid to remitters $704,989.96, making a total of $104,924,853.61; the excess of issues over payments was $150,915.74; the total amount of fees paid by the public to postmasters for the issue of domestic orders was $966,732.75.

Seventy-seven cases of alleged lost remittances of surplus money-order funds amounting to $12,753 were under investigation during the year, and claims were filed in thirty-six cases on account of alleged improper payment of money orders. The amount of all these claims was $767.07. Their number, compared with the total number of payments made during the year is as one to $211,881.

Ninety-nine cases of alleged improperly paid money orders, amounting to $2,153.49, were investigated during the year. In thirty-three instances the amounts, the total of which was $477.75, were recovered by post-office inspectors and paid over to the rightful owners; in seven cases, in which the orders altogether amounted to $84.15, the paying postmasters were, after due investigation, held responsible for the erroneous payments; in four, where erroneous payment was directly attributable to carelessness on the part of remitters, payees, or indorsees, they were required to sustain the loss, $124; in nine, the loss, $268.88 altogether, was assumed by the Department, the paying postmaster having been found not at fault: and in eleven it was ascertained that the orders, amounting to $236.52, had been originally paid to the proper persons. Thirty-five claims, involving the payment of $962.19, were pending at the close of the year.

The amount of unclaimed money orders, domestic and foreign, at the close of the fiscal year is estimated by the Auditor as $1,250,000. "There is no provision of law under which this unclaimed money can be disposed of. It would seem to be expedient that a portion of it should be turned over to the Treasury for the service of the Post-office Department. The Superintendent of the money-order system suggests that it would be well to retain in the hands of the Assistant Treasurer for the operations of the service a sum equal to the amount of all unpaid money-orders during a period of five years next preceding the commencement of each fiscal year. It rarely happens that a money-order more than five years' old is presented for payment. If deemed expedient, in the interest of payees of money-orders, a longer period, for example seven or ten years, might be fixed by Congress, during which the amount of any money order would be payable to the owner thereof, and beyond which the amount of all orders unpaid would accrue to the United States.

"Although the money-order fulfills every reasonable expectation of remitter and payee where the amount sent is considerable, a strong and growing demand has arisen since the withdrawal of fractional currency from circulation for some device by which amounts under five dollars could be transmitted by mail at less cost than at present. I desire to call special attention to the plan proposed by the Superintendent for the transmission of sums less than five dollars by means of an order of a new form, to be termed "postal-order," in which the written application and the advice, which is the chief element of expense as well as of security, are to be dispensed with, so that these orders may be issued more expeditiously and at cheaper rates than money-orders."

THE STAR-ROUTE SERVICE, ETC.

The Postmaster-General is of the opinion that "the country has reached that stage in the progress of its material development where an effort ought to be made to bring the credit and debit sides of the Department's balance sheet nearer together. All or nearly all the long and expensive Star-routes have been superseded by railroad service. The cost of the Star-service ought, therefore, to rapidly decrease in the Western States and Territories. A careful and impartial examination of the Star-service made during the past summer satisfied the Department that large reductions could be made without causing any inconvenience to the sections of country supplied thereby."

"A minute investigation into alleged abuses in the Star-route service was instituted by direction of the late President, and is still being prosecuted. The Post-office Department has co-operated, and will continue to co-operate, with the Department of Justice in this investigation. No one who has not been directly concerned in the matter can fully appreciate the magnitude of the undertaking, the mass of record evidence examined, the difficulties of a personal investigation in sparsely-settled territories, and the results attained by the patient and intelligent labors of the Inspectors of this Department. There can be no doubt, from the facts already ascertained, that the existing statutes leave the way open to great abuses, and that there is abundant ground for asking a judicial investigation of the transactions of the last few years.

"The one serious difficulty in the way of bringing back the Department to a self-sustaining basis is the constantly-increasing cost of the railway mail service. This increase during the past fiscal year was $487,446. I regret to say that there is a deficiency of $478,155 for this branch of the service for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1881, which must be provided for, and also that there must be an increased appropriation for the same service of $1,097,319 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1882. The estimate for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1883, for the railway service is $10,635,000. There has recently been an unprecedented growth of railroads, and this accounts largely for the enormous increase of the cost of the railway service."

The actual payment for the railway-mail service during the year was $11,411,120.90. The cost for the current fiscal year will be $12,006,601, and the estimates for 1883 are $13,181,601. The enormous growth of railroads in 1880 and 1881, and their anticipated increase of mileage in the near future, will account for a great portion of the augmented cost for the service.

There were 461 arrests made during the year for violation of the Postal laws. Of this number 424 cases were prosecuted in the United States Courts, and thirty-seven in the courts of the several States in which the arrests were made. Of the former, 188 persons were convicted, twenty-six were acquitted, three escaped, five forfeited bail, twenty-four proceedings were dismissed, one was killed while resisting arrest, and 177 await trial; thirty highwaymen were arrested and prosecuted in United States Courts.

THE CIVIL-SERVICE QUESTION.

"Careful observation in this Department and elsewhere has but confirmed my conviction of the great public benefit to be derived from conducting the public business on business principles. Some method of relief must be provided from the overwhelming pressure for appointment to clerkships and other subordinate positions, and from the equal pressure for the removal of capable and experienced assistants to make room for those who are not more competent. The public service is a public trust to which every citizen may properly aspire, and the public interest plainly demands that admission to it should not depend upon personal favor, because such favor can not well be impartial, and because a system of appointment by mere influence may be readily perverted to the promotion of private interests and personal ambition. Appointment by influence naturally results in making the tenure of office depend, not upon fidelity and efficiency in the discharge of official duty, but upon the assiduous cultivation of the favor of a patron. Such a tenure is incompatible with the self-respect of the incumbent, and the service must necessarily suffer from the decline of its *morale*. But the evil consequences cannot be limited to the public service; they affect all political action, the purity and vigor of the Government, and the National character itself. The question, therefore, is one of far higher importance than that of the comparative fitness of clerks in the employment of the Government, and really concerns the character and success of republican institutions.

"The first step, in my judgment, toward the relief of the appointing officers and the promotion of the greater efficiency and economy of the civil service would be a method of minor appointment, which should be independent of personal or partisan influence. In some important Government offices of which I have had personal knowledge, such a system is already in operation. In those offices minor appointments are determined solely by proper qualifications, ascertained by impartial tests open to all applicants upon equal terms. The great success which has attended this method of selection proves its practicability, while the good results, both in the service and in the character of the officers thus selected, demonstrates its value. The extension of this method under uniform conditions is earnestly to be desired, both to correct familiar evils in the public service itself and to remove the still graver evils which spring from them.

"In my opinion, the same general principles should govern the selection and retention of employes in this Department. The public is best served by honest, experienced and competent officers, and changes, therefore, should be made carefully and only for reasons affecting official conduct. My views upon this subject are the result of prolonged official experience, and I am persuaded that the practical application of these principles would promote public morality, increase the economy and efficiency of the public service, and assuage the fury of party spirit, against which Washington warned the country as its chief peril."

—A young man died in New York the other day from pyæmia, caused by decayed teeth.